

## Young People's Societies

### SOUL WINNING.

Topic for Sunday, January 17.—How to win souls for Christ. John 1:40-46.

Daily Readings.—Monday, January 11: Winning souls prayerfully. James 5:16-20. Tuesday, January 12: With strong desire. Romans 10:9, 17-21. Wednesday, January 13: Unselfishly. 1 Corinthians 9:14-18. Thursday, January 14: Tactfully. 2 Corinthians 11:11-16. Friday, January 15: Consistently. Psalms 51:7-13. Saturday, January 16: Trustfully. Mark 2:1-5.

We are called to be co-workers with God. He is willing to share with us the privilege of the very highest form of work. Even the winning of souls for him is not put beyond us. Surely the thought should stir us to the utmost.

God uses means to attain all his ends. This is no less true in the world of grace than in the realm of providence. The word, the testimony of his saints, the call of the church, the diligent use of the means of grace, are all used by the Spirit of God to bring souls to himself. Hence the possibility and the practicability of using us in even this loftiest work.

Among the last words of inspiration are these: "Let him that heareth say, Come!" It is as if God wished those words to ring always in our ears. To the command he has affixed a gracious reward. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever." Besides this the end accomplished is sufficient to show the glory of the word. "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

How, then, may we win souls for Christ? One thing needful is **activity**. We must go seek them. "Go out unto the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Andrew sought Simon. Phillip went and brought Nathanael. The woman of Samaria went and told the people of her city concerning Christ. If we sit still and hold our peace, we will contribute nothing to the advancement of the Savior's kingdom or to the saving of souls.

Another thing needed is **promptness**. Those first disciples acted quickly. Paul conferred not with flesh and blood but moved immediately. David said he made haste to do the Lord's will. While we linger men are lost. If we love them we will make no delay.

Another thing is **prayerfulness**. We must keep in touch with the fountain of life all the time that we are seeking to be channels of that life. It is by prayer that we come to that fountain and keep connected with it, through the Spirit.

Another thing is **intense desire**. Ice never sets things on fire, but fire can melt ice. A fervent spirit, a burning desire to save will make many a soul kindle. Paul's intense yearning over Israel, Isaiah's consuming desire and constancy, gave those men their success.

Another thing is **tactfulness**. Tactfulness is wisdom in action. God everywhere, in his providence and in his word, and in the seen results of it, puts a premium upon a wise adaptation of methods to men. "Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," was the Master's injunction to his disciples when he sent them out to work for his kingdom.

And, withal, **strong faith** must accompany the effort. It must be a praying faith, leading us to seek the divine aid always. It must be a self-denying faith, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us." It must be a working faith, breaking up the roof and letting our friend down to Christ if we cannot otherwise reach him. It must be a resolute, conquering faith, exclaiming: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

We are to win souls for Christ, not for ourselves. His is to be the glory. Ours is the honor to be associated with him in such divine work.

The reward to the man who is wise to win souls is as great as if he himself does all the work. This is Christ's way. He is always giving. He treats those who love him as if they were as deserving as himself.

"Can there be perfect serenity, a full sense of communion with God, to one who refuses or neglects so important a duty as soul-winning?"

Contentment consisteth not in adding more fuel, but in taking away some fire.—Fuller.

### LIFE LESSONS FROM GENESIS.

Topic for Sunday, January 24: Life Lessons for me from the Book of Genesis. Gen. 1:1-8, 26-31. Daily Readings. Monday, January 18: Temptation. Gen. 3:1-11. Tuesday, January 20: The Great Surrender. Gen. 6:13-22. Wednesday, January 20: The Great Surrender. Gen. 12:1-7. Thursday, January 21: The Suburbs of Sodom. Gen. 13:5-13. Friday, January 22: Isaac, the Sacrifice. Gen. 22:1-19. Saturday, January 23: Jacob, the Unforgotten. Gen. 28:10-22.

The Bible is the most wonderful as well as the best book the world has ever seen. In its age, in its endurance, in its adaptability, it is the marvel of the world.

One simple fact will account in large measure for the manner in which it has endured and has incorporated itself into the life of so many. It is itself a story of life, and all it tells is drawn from life.

Life is at once the simplest and the most profound study to which the human mind can turn. It interests beyond all other themes. It instructs beyond all other schools. Its lessons are written in living lines.

Life, like history, for after all life is history and history is life, is but philosophy teaching by example, as Bacon has wisely said. There is no effect without a cause. Things do not happen. They both come from and illustrate principles and powers that lie back of them.

The Bible is an account of life. All its parts grow out of life. Even its most didactic portions, in both Testaments, come from practical situations, conditions, and needs that direct the author's words and are the reflection of episodes and conditions in life.

Genesis is full of meaning to all who will believe that "that which hath been is now and that which is to be hath already been," that "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun."

Adam's yielding to temptation, his shuffling and deceit in sin, his guilt trying to hide itself and when laid bare seeking to shift the responsibility, his indifference to privilege and opportunity, his spiritual improvidence: may we not learn practical lessons from the story of this man, and by the grace of God seek to avoid the pitfalls into which he fell?

Cain's and Abel's relations, and their divergent interpretations of the nature of worship and the way of life, one depending upon works and the other by faith laying his sins upon a suffering substitute, the one giving illustration in his murderous act of the profitlessness of his scheme: may we not learn the way of life and see that nought saves us from ourselves and from sin but the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God?

Lamech and his sons, the world type, brilliant in the sciences and arts, first in the development of possession and pleasure, represented the downward tendency of the soul apart from God even when that soul had all that the world could give. The career of Lamech, whose lips uttered the first poetry known in the realm of literature ended in a boasted murder which he celebrated in that first verse: may we not see the result of wealth and culture when these are not dominated by faith?

And who can limit the lessons to be drawn from the career of Noah, in faith building, for a century, the ark that was for the saving of himself and his family, and yet a man so human that his weakness displayed itself as quickly almost as he emerged from that ark? Or from Abraham's life, so full of faith that he was called the father of all them that believe and was mentioned in the Bible by name more than any man of his period of the world's history? Or from Joseph, the model young man, the wise ruler, the faithful son?

Darkness cannot hide us from God. Adversity does not alienate his affection. Weakness does not make him take away his grace. Guiltiness does not frustrate his plan, nor repeated sin estrange his love. Judah, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Tamar, and a host of them tell us in their lives, recorded in this first book, that God changes not and therefore we are not consumed.

The most dangerous force in this country is the fortune with no character behind it.

The fortunate people—the truly fortunate—are not so much those who succeed in life as those who succeed in living.—Edward S. Martin.